

## **NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS**

**Moderator: Michele Higgs**  
**October 25, 2005**  
**3:00 p.m. (EDT)**

**Operator:** Good day everyone, and welcome to this HUD Helps: Resources to Support and Sustain Neighborhood Networks Centers conference call. Today's call is being recorded.

At this time, I would like to turn the call over to Michele Higgs, please go ahead.

**Michele Higgs:** Thank you, Kim. Good afternoon everyone and welcome to Neighborhood Networks' October conference call. The topic for this call is HUD Helps: Resources to Support and Sustain Neighborhood Networks Centers. My name, as you heard, is Michele Higgs, and I'm one of the Technical Assistance coordinators that work with you to address the technical assistance needs of your Neighborhood Networks centers.

The team that has come together over the past year, and that would be DB Consulting Group, Aspen Systems, and BCT Partners were very excited to be a part of this valuable initiative for a second year. While we have worked with the Neighborhood Networks Initiative, we have witnessed first hand its value, both concrete, and intrinsic for the residents and the communities it serves.

Our job is to support you in your efforts to build up and sustain your Neighborhood Networks centers. In doing that, our aim is to provide you always with excellent, professional and

courteous customer service, and technical assistance. You can help us help you, you know. It is important that we hear from you and we invite you to call us at any time on our toll-free information line, which is (888) 312-2743. Technical assistance providers are available to help you with your questions from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday. And if you call outside those hours and leave a message, you can count on a return call the next business day.

Joining us this afternoon will be representatives of the department that make up the Neighborhood Networks Initiative, including our National Director, Delores Pruden. So jot down your questions and reserve them for the end of the presentation, please. Because this is such an important call and we have so much information to impart today, I'll throw my notes aside, and just get into the thick of things. Remember, that getting your business plans into the Strategic Planning And Reporting Tool, also known as START, is key to your growth and success. And there are helpful people right on the other end of the phone at (888) 312-2743 to assist you. Also, the Neighborhood Networks Web site at [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org) is chalk full of resources, not to mention success stories to motivate you. In fact, I've got a fistful of success stories right here. You folks closed out the fiscal year 2005 by opening 38 new Neighborhood Networks centers around the nation during the month of September. Yes, I said 38. Delores, what do you think about that?

**Delores Pruden:** I think that's great.

**Michele Higgs:** I've got so many centers here it would take the better part of this hour to celebrate you all. So suffice it to say, we appreciate your hard work to meet such a goal, congratulations to you all. You know who you are. And welcome to the neighborhood.

Also, just before we started the call, I received notice that two centers have moved from the designated level one to certified level two status in the center classification process, and that's

worth celebrating, too. So we congratulate CWA Cayce Community Learning Center in Tennessee, and Dauphin Gate Neighborhood Networks Center in Alabama.

I'm going to turn the call over now to people who know things and who are eager to share their knowledge with you, knowledge about the resources that HUD has to offer to help you and your centers grow and thrive. To give you an overview of the resources available to you, you will hear from Silvia Benavides who will speak on the topic of program development and START. Jolanda Williams and Rashad Mobley will address the technical assistance component. Linda Daley will speak about what's available in communications. Kenya Crumel will address consortia. Shawn Escoffery will bring you information about partnerships, and Kristen Stevenson will speak about special projects.

But before you hear from any one of these team members, we will first have a few words from the tireless and dedicated National Director of the Neighborhood Networks Initiative, Delores Pruden. Delores?

**Delores Pruden:** Thank you, Michele. Hello, and welcome to the first monthly Neighborhood Networks conference call for the new contract period. This contract period runs from October 1, 2005, to September 30, 2006. HUD, through its Neighborhood Network technical assistance contractors, DB Consulting, Aspen Systems, and BCT Partners will continue to bring services and products to you that will help you manage and operate your center or help you establish a new center.

Today, as Michele has told you, you will hear from persons who will be available to provide you with assistance throughout the contract year. Please take advantage of these offerings. Also, I invite you to attend one of our two Regional Technical Assistance Workshops in the spring. Once we have secured a site, we will notify you and post the information to the Neighborhood Networks Web site. I also invite you to participate in Neighborhood Networks Week in the summer, by holding events that will increase the awareness of Neighborhood Networks.

We are now forging into the second decade of Neighborhood Networks. And we are looking forward to its growth and sustainability. Neighborhood Networks turned 10 years old in September. And we have observed this birthday with a National Training Conference held in Florida in June, and with many events for Neighborhood Networks Week held in August.

During its first 10 years, Neighborhood Networks had many accomplishments, beginning with its growth to more than 1100 centers across the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. An electronic process called START was created to – for the submission of Neighborhood Networks business plans, as well as a process for the classification of centers.

Onsite and remote technical assistance was provided. Many workshops and conferences were held and partnerships created to support centers. Consortia were formed across the country to strengthen centers, and to lead to the creation of a Neighborhood Networks National Consortium. The publication of numerous newsletters, fact sheets, and technical assistance guides, as well as Neighborhood Networks reports and directories full of useful information were made available. All of these accomplishments have led to hundreds of thousands of residents, of HUD housing being served by Neighborhood Networks centers, enabling them to improve their quality of life.

I thank you for being on this call today, demonstrating your involvement, interest, and commitment to Neighborhood Networks. I look forward to a successful year with you. Michele.

**Michele Higgs:** Thank you, Delores. Thank you for your remarks and for joining us today. Now we will hear from Silvia Benavides about program development and the START program.

**Silvia Benavides:** Thank you, Michele. Good afternoon everyone. During my presentation I will describe the type of assistance that we, the program development staff, provide to HUD Neighborhood Networks centers and HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators. Program

development staff assists centers to begin and complete profiles and START business plans, by guiding them through the process of completing each of the sections of START and the center profile. Entering the data to complete their START business plan and/or any assistance they may need to create or update their business forms. Remember that the business plan is good for three years. So I encourage all Neighborhood Networks centers needing to update their business forms to contact us at (888) 312-2743. We are here to help you get started with START.

Program Development staff also assist HUD's Neighborhood Networks Coordinators to review and approve profiles and START business plans submitted by Neighborhood Networks centers and generates certificates for designated centers meeting basic requirements. We also provide information and technical assistance regarding center classification, which Steve is going to talk a little bit more about that. And we also respond to the toll-free information line, to provide technical assistance, information, and referral services to the array of callers.

You can call the toll-free number at (888) 312-2743 for assistance. The information line is staffed from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., eastern time, Monday through Friday. And this concludes my presentation. I will turn it over to Steve.

**Steve McClaine:** Thanks, Silvia. We just also wanted to speak a little more about center classification.

As Michele mentioned, we are starting to see centers move forward in advancement up the levels, and we're very excited about that.

The classification process was implemented in the summer of last year, I'm sorry, summer of this year, and it's a three level process. Designated level one, which is for all new centers that become Neighborhood Networks centers, as well as all existing centers currently. Moving to level two, the centers that Michele announced at the beginning of the call, would be certified, and those centers have shown that they actively operate programs that support resident self-sufficiency. And then the third level is the model level, which is an example of the excellence that the

Neighborhood Networks Initiative can provide through centers. And we are certainly excited to assist centers that wish to apply for that. There's a current window of opportunity, where certified centers can immediately apply for model level status, via START. And that window of opportunity lasts until December 31<sup>st</sup>. So we want to encourage any and all centers that are interested in applying for model status to contact us via the toll-free line, and we can provide you with assistance. There is also information about center classification on the Web site. There's a listing of the incentives that each level of status will receive. And there are other examples of rewards and information that can be provided. So again, please let us know if you're interested in applying for advanced status, and we would be happy to assist you with that.

And I will turn it over to Rashad and Jolanda.

**Rashad Mobley:** Good afternoon, as you've heard my name is Rashad Mobley and I'm the Technical Assistance Manager for Neighborhood Networks. My colleague Jolanda Williams will be speaking about onsite technical assistance. However, I will be primarily focused on technical assistance for HUD staff.

During this fiscal year, technical assistance staff members will work with HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators, to keep them abreast of activities, to facilitate the exchange of ideas, and to share the experience of their colleagues. Technical assistance providers will offer ongoing assistance to HUD headquarters and field office staff by conducting monthly outreach activities such as this conference call, and hosting quarterly regional conference calls with HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators where they are provided information relative to the operation, maintenance, and creation of Neighborhood Networks centers.

HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators will also receive updates on partnerships, Neighborhood Networks resources, center operations, and sustainability issues that occur within each of the HUD regions. Also, starting this week, HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators

will be able to nominate themselves for an onsite visit lasting approximately three (3) days.

Twenty lucky HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators will have a member of the technical assistance team assist them with presentations, workshops, and other projects that involve promoting Neighborhood Networks to HUD project managers, as well as property owners.

Each of these HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators will receive a tutorial in START and its enhanced features, be informed of workforce development agencies that could partner with their centers, and be provided with marketing tools, informational brochures, and other documents needed to promote Neighborhood Networks. The HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators will also have the opportunity to choose two Neighborhood Networks centers that will benefit from a START tutorial from the TA staff. And I'd like to also thank the 20 HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators and the centers they chose who participated in technical assistance visits last year – the last fiscal year, excuse me. I hope to see new centers, and completed business plans out of all of you.

We also encourage all HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators to submit success stories about centers within your region. Not only do they give you a chance to blow your own horn, but they also serve as an inspiration to other centers around the country. Technical assistance staff will also work with HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators to develop relationships with multifamily property owners of FHA-insured and -assisted housing.

TA staff members will continue to implement marketing strategies that encourage owners to not only open new centers, but promote the success of existing centers as well. In each case, property owners will be provided with the information to show that by supporting Neighborhood Networks they are integrating and enhancing their corporate profiles, and making their properties more competitive, improving the quality of life for their residents, as well as creating stronger communities.

In conclusion, I'd like to say that I am very excited about this upcoming year, and look forward to meeting, talking, e-mailing, and working with all of you. At this time, I'll turn it over to Jolanda Williams who will talk a bit about onsite technical assistance.

**Jolanda Williams:** Hello, everyone. Thanks for calling in today. I'm Jolanda. And I look forward to working with all of you as we progress to the onsite technical assistance this fiscal year. We're excited about being able to provide onsite technical assistance to Neighborhood Networks centers across the country.

This year, 50 Neighborhood Networks centers that have not previously received onsite technical assistance, will be selected to receive onsite visits. Stakeholders such as the HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators, property owners, center staff, residents, and partners will work through challenges that impede upon a center's success. Technical assistance providers will implement guidance in the area of partnership development, 501 (c)(3) application, design and implementation of workforce programs, outreach to residents, tracking and evaluation of performance, outreach to stakeholders, health resources, microenterprise development, and business plan update and development. And lastly, but certainly not least, grantwriting.

To help ensure progress and success, center stakeholders will receive two (2) site visits this fiscal year. It was also determined that two (2) to six (6) months after the initial visit, a follow-up visit will occur to help stakeholders reach their goals. Throughout the entire process, stakeholders will be asked to provide input and participate in the center's development. This will include determining a center's strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, working through action plan items, attending partnership meetings, and other activities needed to help the center.

Along with the 50 centers receiving onsite visits, an additional 20 centers will receive comprehensive direction throughout the year. Centers that receive onsite visits in fiscal year 2005 will be selected to receive either onsite or remote assistance. This will depend upon the

center's progression since last year's onsite visits. Technical assistance coordinators are currently contacting these centers to determine the level of assistance required.

Also, in the coming weeks, HUD Neighborhood Network Coordinators, property owners, and center staff will receive information to nominate their center for onsite visits. If you are interested, please respond to the information you receive. We look forward to working with you throughout the year. Now, I'll turn the call over to Linda Daley.

**Linda Daley:** Good afternoon everyone. This is Linda Daley. I'm the manager of the communications team. There are four of us: writers, editors, and a Web specialist. And we're responsible for producing, writing, and editing a variety of print publications, which are loaded to the Web as well. Some of these publications include technical assistance guides on various topics including grantwriting, workforce development and fact sheets. Those are written and edited and produced. They're printed, and they're loaded to the Web in English and Spanish. We are responsible for writing, editing, and producing the newsletters, which are released twice a year. Last year's issues showcased Neighborhood Networks Week and the national conference.

We also write success stories. They're about two (2) to three (3) page summaries of centers around the nation. And they showcase successes of the center, some interesting programs they're doing, working with partners. Basically, they too summarize best practices being done by centers.

We also do some large projects, such as the Neighborhood Networks report, and the directory. And we also write some technical articles here and there for placement in trade journals in hopes to better spread the word about Neighborhood Networks. Our team also does Web updates, standard Web updates, and writing and posting of funding opportunities. And I think that's the highlights of the communications team.

So I'll turn it over to Kristen.

**Kristen Stevenson:** OK. Good afternoon everyone. This is Kristen Stevenson. I am the special projects manager. And if any of you have participated in any of our national events, you might know myself or Jamie Tang or Paloma Costa; the other staff who work on the special events for Neighborhood Networks. If not, we're looking forward to meeting you in the upcoming year. We have a really busy year this year coming up with our events. Delores mentioned what we're going to be doing as far as the events that Neighborhood Network is going to be holding.

In the order of how they're going to occur, we have the Regional Technical Assistance Workshops, which we refer to as (RTAWs). We have Neighborhood Networks Week. And then, in a year, we'll have another national conference. First, the Regional Technical Assistance Workshops will be held, like Delores said, in the Spring of 2006. And we're working very hard right now to secure locations and dates. And as soon as we do get that information, we'll be sure to share it with everybody. The – as you all know, the save the date card will be the first item that you'll see with that detailed information on it. So stay tuned for that, that will be mailed to your center, and up on our Web site.

What the Regional Technical Assistance Workshops are, they're a little bit different from our national conference. We provide the workshops in different regions of the country. We try to keep these workshops very interactive, very informative workshops. We have concurrent workshops. We have general sessions. We also have a pre-conference session on grantwriting that we're going to be holding. We – also in the next month, I want everybody to know we're going to be getting in touch with all of the centers, property owners and managers, HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators, previous conference attendees for focus group calls. We want everybody's input on what you need. We have an idea of what it is that you need with all of these great people around the table, they work with you directly. We want to know what it is that

you want out of these workshops. So stay tuned on the Web site. We'll be posting the dates of the focus group calls, sending e-mails, faxes, making sure that everybody knows about that.

Neighborhood Networks Week will be held in August of 2006. The dates are still up in the air, but once we get the secure dates for them, we'll be sure to let everybody know. What we do for Neighborhood Networks Week here is we provide you with resources to help prepare for events. And we have an event-planning guide, that we will be sending out to all of the centers to help you plan events. We also have the staff. Everybody keeps talking about the staff that are answering the toll-free line. We have people who are here to help you plan your events, give you input and advice on some of the events that other centers are holding and different ideas that we have.

We also have some national events that we hold that we encourage all centers to participate in, Webcasts. We have last year, e-pals. We have essay contests, poster contests. Lots of exciting things that we'll be announcing in the next few months, there will be more information.

We just finished the national conference, like I said, won't be held again until 2007. We had a great time in Orlando. It was a really informative conference, a huge success. We had over 400 attendees. Over 30 workshops, pre-conference sessions, really informative exhibit hall, a recognition ceremony. It was probably our best event yet. Sorry if you weren't able to join us, but we'll be sure that the conference in 2007 is up to par. And we're excited about the Regional Technical Assistance Workshops. And also, excited to hear from you about what it is that you need or want out of these events.

So I am now going to turn it over Shawn and partnership.

**Shawn Escoffery:** OK. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Shawn Escoffery. I'm with Neighborhood Networks National Partnership Development and Consortium Development team. An important component of the Neighborhood Networks Initiative is building partnerships with

national organizations. Many of which have paved the way for collaborations between local Neighborhood Networks centers and organizations of varying size and scope. Partnerships can vary in length and scope and can range from organizing a single event, to multi-year agreements driving to train and place residents into jobs.

By partnering with a national public or private organization Neighborhood Networks centers and consortia can access products and sources negotiated between Neighborhood Networks and the national partner. There are a number of national partnerships that are making a difference in the lives of thousands of people who participate in Neighborhood Networks centers across the country. And each year, more partnerships are developed to better serve the needs and populations of Neighborhood Networks centers.

Partnerships provide a way of meeting organizational goals, while at the same time maximizing resources. Often times, partnerships also serve as a mechanism by which Neighborhood Networks centers and consortium through the efforts of the national partnership development team, and consortium development team, are able to secure strategic alliances with partners that can assist individual centers in fulfilling their vision, goals, and identify needs. Partners can provide any number of resources, and the Neighborhood Networks National Partnership Development team typically targets partners primarily in the areas of workforce development, Internet connectivity, funding, both financial and in-kind, and educational opportunities.

Annually 10 national partners participate in the Neighborhood Networks Initiative. One of the benefits of participating in the consortium development process includes access to national partnerships. Each year, at least three consortia sites receive national partnership opportunities based on the following criteria. The partnership resource meets – identifies consortia need or needs; partners preference or specify geographic area matches consortia geographic locations; Neighborhood Networks Consortia site has the capacity to receive partnership resources.

National partnerships targeted towards consortia require the close cooperation and collaboration of both the national partnership development team and the consortium development team. Both teams work closely together, and fully understand the needs of the other in order to achieve the greatest benefits for the three consortia groups to receive national partnership.

At this time, I would like to turn the call over to Kenya Crumel who will speak in more detail about our consortium development. Thank you.

**Kenya Crumel:** Hi, good afternoon. This is Kenya Crumel of the Neighborhood Networks Consortium Development team. The Neighborhood Networks Consortium Development team is responsible for leading the consortium development process, and helping participants to determine what type of technical assistance they might need in forming a new consortium or reviving an existing one.

The consortium development is based on the creation of strong partnerships between individual Neighborhood Networks centers. A consortium is created when three or more Neighborhood Networks centers form a partnership based on the set of perceived mutual benefits. The benefits of consortium membership include access to a larger, more resourceful network of Neighborhood Networks centers, increased partnership opportunities, more funding opportunities, and the possibility of gaining 501(c)(3) status. The consortium membership gives individual Neighborhood Networks centers the opportunity to share resources and ideas, which allows them to address challenges and achieve goals together.

There are over – there are currently over 20 existing consortia either within a state, or statewide. Some existing sites are in Alabama, Seattle, Washington and Spokane, Washington, Indiana, southern Louisiana, Oklahoma, north and southern California, Kansas City, and Atlanta, Georgia.

In addition, there's also a national consortium that was formed in 2005 and you can visit their Web site at [www.nationalnnc.org](http://www.nationalnnc.org) to find out more about their activity.

The new and revived consortia have been proposed for development this year in Philadelphia – just proposed, in Philadelphia, New York City, Virginia, and San Antonio just to name a few.

Building a Neighborhood Networks Consortium requires the hard work and dedication of HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators and staff. Consortium participants will work together to create an identity, develop a mission, and design a strategy for meeting both the needs of the individual centers, and those of the consortium group. There are six basic steps to this process. One, initiating the process, getting the participants together, and familiarizing themselves with one another. Step two, learning from each other. Step three, creating a common vision. Four, designing the strategic plans. Five, building structure and leadership. And six, making things happen. In other words, putting the strategic plan into action.

The consortium development team will provide the following services to new and existing consortia throughout the year: Monthly funding updates, quarterly conference calls, quarterly success stories, quarterly Web contacts, onsite technical assistance to consortia sites, remote technical assistance consortia sites, strategic planning, and board development. We look forward to working with you this year.

**Michele Higgs:** Kenya, Michele here, thank you so much for your remarks. It sounds like a really rich opportunity for our centers. If no one else has anything to add, I would like Kim to open up the lines and see what kind of questions we have. Kim.

**Operator:** Thank you. The question-and-answer session will be conducted electronically. If you would like to ask a question, please do so by pressing the “star” key followed by the digit one (1) on your touch-tone telephone. If you are using a speakerphone, please make sure your “mute” function is turned off to allow your signal to reach our equipment. Once again, press “star, one” to ask a question.

And I have no questions at this time, but I would like to give everyone another opportunity. If you have a question today please press "star, one." And it appears that we have a question from Jerryl Bennett.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. Thank you. Hi Jerryl.

**Jerryl Bennett:** Hi. How are you all?

**Michele Higgs:** Very well.

**Jerryl Bennett:** The Regional Technical Assistance Workshops, I think they're a great idea. How many regions are – how many regions will you plan on conducting them in? And what are the requirements?

**Kristen Stevenson:** We're planning on having the workshops in two regions. Requirements – I'm not sure what you mean by requirements?

**Jerryl Bennett:** Well I sure would like to get established -- one in this region, whatever that includes as it relates to a region.

**Kristen Stevenson:** OK. I see. We don't really have any requirements at this point. What we're looking for is the amount of activity in Neighborhood Networks centers in certain areas, and just where we've held previous events and different things where our partners are, the National Consortium. We're taking a lot of things into consideration right now, but I'd be happy to follow up with you to get some more information from you about your region.

**Jerryl Bennett:** Absolutely.

**Kristen Stevenson:** We'd consider it.

**Michele Higgs:** Sounds good. Jerryl is in Virginia,

**Kristen Stevenson:** Yes.

**Michele Higgs:** HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinator in Virginia. OK, Jerryl is that good for that question?

**Jerryl Bennett:** Yes, ma'am.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. Great. Thanks.

**Jerryl Bennett:** Thanks.

**Michele Higgs:** Kim any more on the line?

**Operator:** And I have no further questions at this time.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. Then I have a question, and this would be for Linda. I happen to work with a number of HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators, and I just recently got a question about the directory. Is that something that is coming down the pike soon? I know you mentioned it.

**Linda Daley:** Yes, it is. It's being printed at the moment and it will be distributed with the reports.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. Terrific. So it will go out to all of the coordinators. OK. There was – it was the first time I had gotten that question. And the other question was for Kenya, are you still with us?

**Kenya Crumel:** Yes, I'm here.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. That's OK. You're not sitting at the table. So I wanted to ask one more question about the consortia. How big of a response do you get from centers that – are you stepping up to centers or are centers stepping up to you with regard to interest in consortia? And how big a push are you getting?

**Kenya Crumel:** It's a two-way street. We typically reach out to the HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinator – the HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinator and through them, we then reach out to centers, and find out their interest and activity. And sometimes get a call from some of the HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators without me initiating it, like Jerryl Bennett who just asked a question, called us, and requested that we work in his area.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. Great. Let me see, my next question was with regard to Neighborhood Networks Week. I know we had a bang-up session this year. What do you think you got from that session that's going to give some juice to the upcoming session?

**Kristen Stevenson:** We learn every year from the previous year. And like Michele said, we had our highest number ever of centers that registered to participate in local events. So we're really excited about that. That means that centers are really getting a hold of Neighborhood Networks Week and really finding the benefits of participating in it. Seeing that it really does give them a place in their community and gives them a chance to market themselves to the community. So we're really focusing on helping centers to do their local events this year, and planning national events that will allow centers to prepare for their local events. And they can all kind of feed into one another.

So we're really planning for a lot of exciting events this year, locally for Neighborhood Networks centers. And we're going to be here to help more than we've ever been to help centers in doing that.

**Michele Higgs:** Great. Great. Kim, any questions?

**Operator:** And once again, it is "star one" to ask a question. And I have no questions at this time.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. Delores are you still with us?

**Delores Pruden:** Yes, I'm still here.

**Michele Higgs:** I understand from Kim there are no questions on the line. I'd like to go ahead and maybe wait for one more moment and then close the call out.

**Delores Pruden:** Very good.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. Kim, we're going to wait one more time. Are there any questions on the queue?

**Operator:** I have no questions at this time.

**Delores Pruden:** I do have a comment, Michele.

**Michele Higgs:** OK.

**Delores Pruden:** The directory and the Neighborhood Networks report will be mailed to the centers as well as the HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. So it's a very broad mailing then.

**Delores Pruden:** Right.

**Operator:** And I do have a question now.

**Michele Higgs:** OK.

**Operator:** And that comes from Abraham Odom.

**Michele Higgs:** Hi, Abraham.

**Operator:** Abraham Odom, your line is open, please go ahead.

**Female:** Hello?

**Operator:** Please go ahead.

**Female:** Yes, I'm from the greater Washington area, metropolitan area, and I'd like someone to please explain how my center can be nominated for technical assistance. And can you also explain the difference between remote technical assistance and onsite technical assistance? How can remote assistance help me? Thank you.

**Michele Higgs:** I'm going to turn that call over to Jolanda.

**Jolanda Williams:** Thank you for calling in. That's a great question. We're actually gearing up this year for onsite technical assistance. And we're actually very, very proud of the onsite technical assistance component of Neighborhood Networks.

What we will be doing, and we're actually planning on sending out tomorrow, nomination forms so that centers throughout the country can nominate their centers to receive onsite technical assistance, both an initial and a follow-up site visit. We also have 20 centers that received technical assistance last year, that will be eligible for either remote or onsite technical assistance.

What onsite technical assistance consists of – is an actual site visit. The components are still the same. You still have a technical assistance coordinator working side-by-side with centers to assist them. And I'll repeat again, to assist them with either partnership development, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt filing, design implementation, workforce programs, outreach to residents, tracking and evaluation of performance, outreach to stakeholders, health resources, microenterprise development, START business plan, update and development, and also grantwriting. The remote technical assistance components is where technical assistance coordinators work remotely here at the Neighborhood Networks headquarters to assist centers in these particular areas; onsite component, technical assistance coordinators will actually go onsite to centers and spend anywhere from three (3) to five (5) days with centers providing them with these services.

Does that answer the question?

**Female:** Yes, thank you.

**Delores Pruden:** Jolanda, can we pass on Michelle Porter's name. She wanted to know how she could be nominated for technical assistance, right?

**Jolanda Williams:** Delores, that's a good question. That – in case there are any HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators on the line, a lot – right when we do the Neighborhood Networks center nominations, we'll also do the HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinator nomination. The HUD Neighborhood Network Coordinators are eligible to nominate centers. So we will – HUD

Neighborhood Networks Coordinators can also nominate centers to receive onsite technical assistance. And so I'll do that, I'll make sure that the caller has her information.

**Delores Pruden:** OK. So we know the caller's name and how to get in touch.

**Michele Higgs:** Yes, that will come up in the – we'll have that.

**Jolanda Williams:** On the roster.

**Michele Higgs:** On the roster.

**Delores Pruden:** OK.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. Thank you much. Kim, anyone else?

**Operator:** Yes, I have a question from Telisa Edwards.

**Telisa Edwards:** Hi, good afternoon.

**Michele Higgs:** Hello, how are you?

**Telisa Edwards:** Great, thank you. I work with – our nonprofit organization works with three Neighborhood Networks centers in Houston, Texas. And I was calling because I wanted to get a little bit more information regarding the reward status, and application for advanced status, and what does that mean? What type of reward status would you achieve? Could someone explain that a little bit more? Thank you.

**Steve McClaine:** I'm not sure what you're referring to in terms of ...

**Michele Higgs:** I think she is referring to center classification. I imagine.

**Telisa Edwards:** I think – hello?

**Steve McClaine:** Yes.

**Telisa Edwards:** When you were talking about the model center status, and someone was speaking about the application for advanced center. And there are some rewards regarding that status.

**Steve McClaine:** Right. OK. Thank you for the question. Basically with each level of classification there are different incentives and rewards that centers will receive by achieving those levels, in addition to inscribed plaques that will be provided for each level. Certified centers, for example, receive the opportunity to be featured on the Web site and to be featured through Neighborhood Networks events, special recognition during Neighborhood Networks week and so on. Model centers will receive those rewards, and in addition to that have the opportunity to host special recognition events and also to be featured in special pilot projects that would be only required for model centers and those that have achieved that status. So, we want to make sure that all centers receive the opportunity to benefit from the assistance that we provide. But there are certain incentives and certain products and rewards that are available as centers achieve and climb up the classification ladder. And there's also additional information about the incentives on our Web site at [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org).

**Michele Higgs:** Does that help?

**Telisa Edwards:** Yes, it does. Thank you so much.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. Thank you.

**Operator:** And I have no further questions at this time.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. We've got a little time left, so I'm going to just make my closing remarks here.

First, I want to thank all of our speakers, both here and remote. I think this has been a good session and very informative for our centers and our HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators.

It's already been said, but I'm going to remind you anyway, that the process of nominating centers for onsite technical assistance is about to begin. So, HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators you need to start thinking about the centers that you would like to nominate for onsite technical assistance. And center directors; watch your mail for nomination information.

Another point I'd like to make is we have a number of good people here who can answer questions if you haven't thought of them this afternoon because sometimes that happens. You can reach any of the speakers through the toll-free line at (888) 312-2743. And I'll tell you once again what everyone talked about, and Steve McClaine talked about the center classification process. Silvia Benavides talked about program development and the START program. Jolanda Williams and Rashad Mobley talked about the technical assistance component of this initiative. Kristen Stevens – pardon me – Stevenson talked about special projects, and Linda Daley about communications. We also had Shawn Escoffery who was talking about partnerships and Kenya Crumel on the topic of consortia.

So again, if you don't have any questions now, and I'm going to ask once more before we conclude, (Amy) – I'm sorry, Kim, is there anyone on the queue?

**Operator:** I have no further questions.

**Michele Higgs:** OK. Since we have no further questions, again, I thank you all. And I remind you about the nomination process coming up. And I want to let you know that our next conference call, which will be November 15<sup>th</sup>, is entitled, "Let's Get Organized! It's the A to Z or organizational management." And I hope you'll be able to join us on that day, that's Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, at three (3:00) o'clock p.m. for that informative discussion. Until then, take good care. Thank you much.

**Operator:** And that does conclude our conference call today. Thank you all for your participation.

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